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COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

STATE CORPORATION COMMISSION

AT RICHMOND, NOVEMBER 23, 1998

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, ex rel.

STATE CORPORATION COMMISSION

CASE NO. PUC960161

Ex Parte: In re: Investigation of
area code relief for the 703 code
of Northern Virginia

ORDER ON AREA CODE RELIEF

On November 13, 1996, members of the telecommunications industry and the Commission Staff held a meeting regarding area code relief for the 703 code. At that time, area code 703 was projected to reach exhaustion of available telephone numbers during the fourth quarter of 1999.

Industry representatives attending the meeting were not able to reach a consensus on a specific relief plan but did narrow the options to two alternatives: (1) split the existing 703 area along a north-south boundary, with the eastern portion retaining the 703 area code; or (2) assign a new area code (an overlay) to the same geographic area as the existing 703 area.

On December 20, 1996, Bell Atlantic-Virginia ("BA-VA"), on behalf of itself and other members of the telecommunications industry, requested this Commission to initiate an investigation

to determine which relief plan should be implemented. Pursuant to 47 C.F.R. § 52.19(a), the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC") delegated to the state commissions the authority to implement overlays, splits and boundary re-alignments for new area codes.

By order dated February 21, 1997, the Commission assigned this case to a Hearing Examiner and directed that public notice be published notifying the public and interested parties of the relief plans suggested by the telecommunications industry and ordered that a local public hearing be held to receive comments on what form of relief should be implemented.

On March 24, 1997, a Hearing Examiner's Ruling was entered scheduling two hearings (afternoon and evening) in Annandale, Virginia on June 23, 1997. The ruling also invited the public to file written comments on the matter of appropriate area code relief.

After consideration of the testimony received at the hearings and comments filed by interested parties, the Hearing Examiner entered a report on October 9, 1997, recommending that (1) a geographic split be implemented in the 703 area when relief becomes necessary, and (2) the Division of Communications Staff investigate whether there are any conservation plans available which could delay relief of the 703 area code.

On October 24, 1997, BA-VA filed comments on the Hearing Examiner's report, restating its initial recommendation that an overlay is the best relief method for the 703 area. BA-VA also stated that the projected exhaust time for available telephone numbers had changed from the fourth quarter of 1999 to the third quarter of 2000 thereby allowing the Commission more time to make its decision.

On November 7, 1997, the Commission issued its Order which deferred a decision in this matter. The Order of November 7, 1997, also directed a Staff investigation of number conservation plans which might delay implementation of area code relief for area code 703. On June 23, 1998, the Commission issued an Order granting the Commission's Staff an extension of time through December 31, 1998, within which to file a report on its investigation of number conservation plans for area code 703. On July 17, 1998, the Commission issued an Order denying a motion for reconsideration of the extension of time brought by BA-VA and further granted leave to all parties to file supplemental comments to the Hearing Examiner's report, to be filed no later than August 31, 1998. Pursuant to said Order, supplemental comments were filed in this case by Washington/Baltimore Cellular Limited Partnership ("Washington/Baltimore"), MCImetro Access Transmission Services of Virginia, Inc. ("MCImetro"), BA-VA, AT&T Communications of Virginia, Inc. ("AT&T") and Bell Atlantic Mobile ("BAM").

Additionally, 424 comments were filed by members of the public at large.

In summary, the 424 comments filed by the public, as well as the supplemental comments of Washington/Baltimore, BAM and BA-VA, urged the Commission to adopt a new overlay area code. The supplemental comments of AT&T and MCImetro called for an area code split.

The Commission, having further considered the report of its Hearing Examiner filed October 9, 1997, as well as the public's comments and supplemental comments filed herein and the applicable law, now reaches the following conclusion with regard to the appropriate area code relief.

CONCLUSION

We conclude that the implementation of local number portability throughout the 703 area code has substantially changed the circumstances upon which the Hearing Examiner had based his recommendation that an area code split be ordered. Today, the implementation of an overlay will not substantially alter the dialing patterns within area code 703. We find that an overlay is the most reasonable method of accomplishing area code relief for the 703 area code and should be so ordered. Our decision to implement an overlay now will allow the telecommunications industry and certain telephone customers, such as security alarm providers, an adequate period to reprogram equipment and to allow the general public a period of

permissive dialing using either 7 or 10 digits for local calls within some portions of the 703 area code.

Accordingly, IT IS ORDERED THAT:

(1) An area code overlay shall be implemented for the 703 area.

(2) The area code administrator and appropriate parties are hereby directed to take such actions as are necessary to implement the area code overlay ordered for the 703 area.